

REMARKS

Claim 1-7 are currently pending. Claims 1, 6 and 7 have been amended herein.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 6 to clarify the discrepancy in the interpretation of the term "leading edge" and use of the term "central portion which is in contact with the developer."

Applicants submit that the limitation of the clearance regulating member not being in contact with the developer has the meaning that the entire surface of the clearance regulating member facing the developer does not contact the developer provided on the developer carrying member. This is apparent from Fig. 4 of the specification which shows contact resulting in developer accumulation. Whereas the present invention, as set forth in the amended claims, specifically states that there is no contact.

Fig. 6 of *Takeda et al.* is the only disclosure of the reference relied upon in the previous actions. *Takeda et al.* does not illustrate contact between the developer and area "Y" on attached Fig. 6, hence, the claims were considered anticipated. However, the reference does show contact between the clearance regulating member (marked "X" on attached Fig. 6.) and the developer on the surface of the clearance regulating member facing the developer layer (irregular circles on attached Fig. 6). As the developer is in contact with the clearance regulating member, the disclosure of Fig. 6 of *Takeda et al.* is equivalent to Fig. 4 of the present invention which shows developer accumulation resulting from the contact.

In order to make certain this disclosure in Fig. 6 of *Takeda et al.* is outside the scope of the present invention, Applicants have amended the language used in independent claims 1 and 6 to more distinctly point out that the clearance regulating member does not in its entirety contact the developer layer formed on the developer carrier member. Specifically,

... the clearance regulating member is free from contact with the developer formed on said developer carrying member.

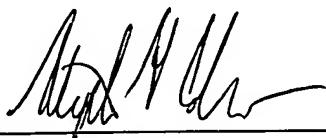
Applicants respectfully submit this amendment distinguishes the present invention from *Takeda et al.* which shows developer in contact with the clearance regulating member in Fig. 6.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance. If, for any reason, it is believed that this application is not in condition for allowance, Examiner is encouraged to contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number below to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: Figure 6 from *Takeda et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,327,339)
Request for Continued Examination w/fee

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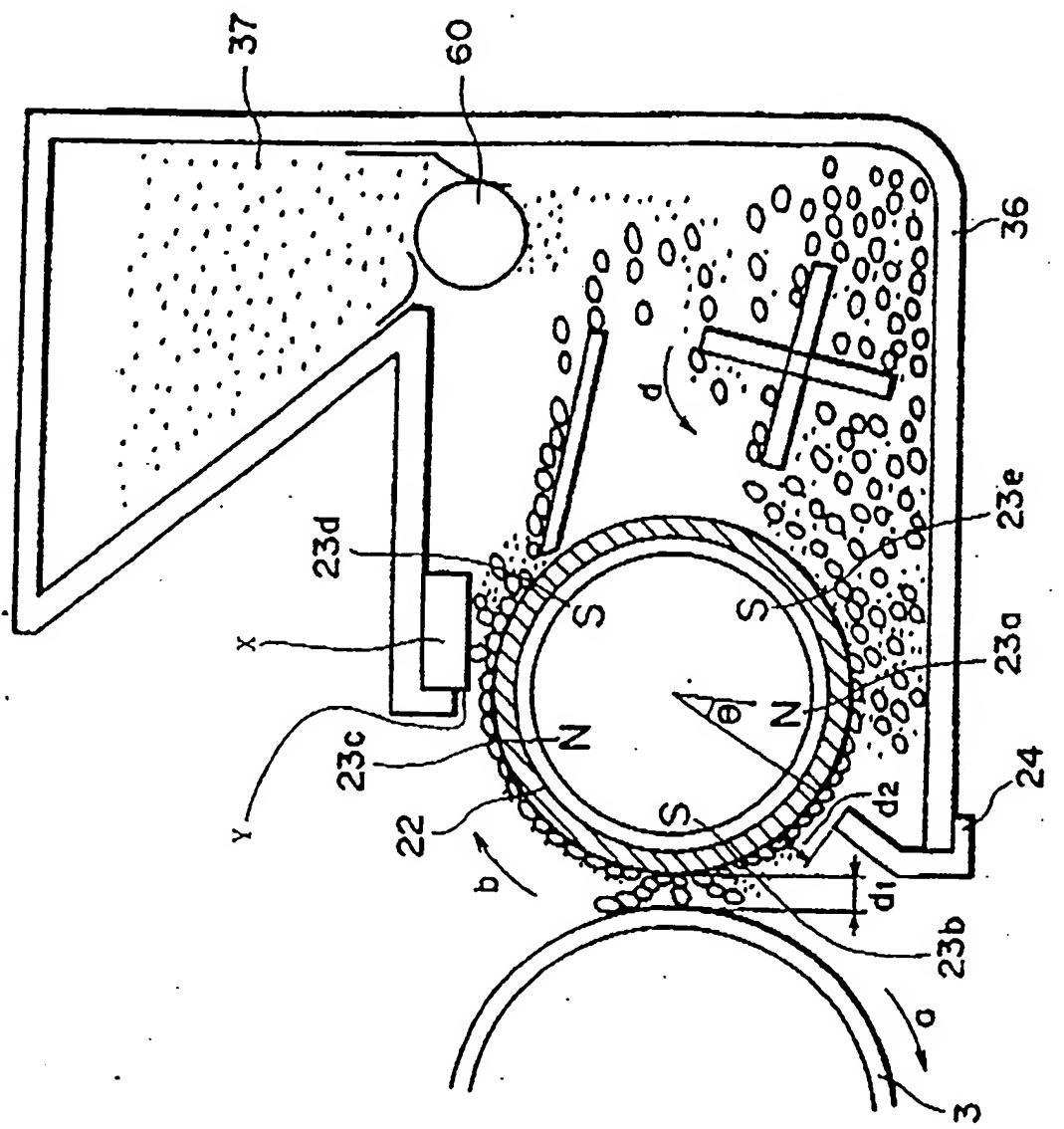


FIG. 6